

The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

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The Reign of Solomon, part 1: Overview of 2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31

Overview of 2 Chr 1:1-9:31

The Chronicler's record of Solomon is closely connected to his account of David's life. Both kings served as ideals for the post-exilic community. To understand how Solomon functioned as such an ideal, it is necessary to gain an awareness of the broad contours of the Chronicler's portrait of his reign. At this point, we will sketch a general comparison between Chronicles and Kings as well as an overarching outline of this material.

Comparison of 1 Chr 1:1-9:31 and 2 Kgs 1:1-11:43

A number of significant features in the Chronicler's portrait of Solomon become clear from a large scale comparison with the record in Kings (see figure 21).

The book of Kings presents a balanced picture of Solomon's life. It begins with his struggle for the throne (1 Kgs 1:1-2:46a) and ends with Solomon's apostasy and decline (1 Kgs 11:1-40). The middle portion of the record of Kings focuses primarily on his positive accomplishments (1 Kgs 3:1-10:29).

By contrast, the Chronicler's desire to present Solomon as an ideal for his post-exilic readers caused him to omit the problematic rise of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:1-2:46a) and his decline (1 Kgs 11:1-40). Beyond this, the Chronicler also omitted several portions of the middle section in Kings (3:1-10:29). He dropped the account of Solomon's Egyptian wife (3:1-3) because of the moral implications of the marriage. He also omitted the account of Solomon's political wisdom (3:16-4:34) and the record of Solomon's palace (7:1-12) to focus exclusively on the king's building projects, especially the temple.

The result of these changes was that Solomon's reign reflects the four major motifs that appear in David's reign. First, Solomon is portrayed as a king of high moral character. Two major omissions from Kings reflect this motif.

1 Chr		1 Kgs
-----	Solomon's Struggle for Throne	1:1-2:46a
1:1	Solomon's Establishment	2:46b
-----	Solomon's Egyptian Wife	3:1-3
1:2-13	Solomon's Promises	3:4-15
-----	Solomon's Political Wisdom	3:16-4:34
1:14-17	Solomon's Construction Wisdom	10:26-29
2:1-18	Solomon's Help From Hiram	5:1-18
3:1-14	Solomon's Construction of Temple	6:1-38
-----	Solomon's Construction of Palace	7:1-12
3:15-5:1	Solomon's Construction of Temple	7:13-51
5:2-7:10	Solomon's Dedication of Temple	8:1-66
7:11-22	Solomon's Response from God	9:1-9
8:1-9:28	Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth	9:10-10:29
-----	Solomon's Apostasy and Decline	11:1-40
9:29-31	Solomon's Death	11:41-43

Comparison of 1 Chr 1:1-9:31 and 2 Kgs 1:1-11:43 (figure 21)

1) The book of Kings describes Solomon's struggles and his ruthless treatment of political opponents (1 Kgs 1:1-2:46a). Solomon's actions are defended by the writer of Kings, but opposition from within the Davidic court and Solomon's treatment of his political opponents were probably considered too controversial for the Chronicler to maintain in his history. In all events, omitting this material removed any question about Solomon's rise.

2) Beyond this, the Chronicler also omitted Solomon's foreign wives and the syncretism they introduced into his kingdom (1 Kgs 11:1-25). Solomon's Egyptian wife is mentioned once, but only inadvertently (2 Chr 8:11).

Second, the Chronicler was also very interested in the extent of Solomon's support. Although this motif is not as prominent in the Solomonic material as it is in the Davidic record, it is evident in at least two places that Solomon reigned over all of Israel and Judah.

1) In 1 Chr 29:22b-25 Solomon was publicly recognized **by all Israel** (1 Chr 29:23) as the successor to David. The scene gives a clear indication that the entire nation recognized Solomon as King.

2) The Chronicler added an introduction to the story of Solomon's dream at Gibeon (1:1-6). In this material the Chronicler noted that Solomon gave decrees to **all Israel** (1:2). This passage makes it clear that even early in his reign Solomon was in the company of supporters representing the entire nation.

Third, a number of additions emphasized Solomon's interest in the temple. The location and time at which Solomon began to build the temple appear (3:1-2). Specific aspects of the edifice are described (4:7-9). The presence of Yahweh came to Solomon's temple in dramatic display (7:1b-3,6). The practice of sacrifice and temple order also appears in the account (8:12-16). In these ways, the Chronicler presented Solomon as a monarch fully devoted to the proper establishment and operation of the temple.

Fourth, because Solomon's reign was presented as an ideal for the post-exilic community, special note is taken of the times of joy and celebration in his kingdom. Some of these events already appeared in Kings, but the Chronicler included them because they fit with his interests (2 Chr 5:2-3 // 1 Kgs 8:2; 2 Chr 7:8-10 // 1 Kgs 8:65-66; 2 Chr 9:7 // 1 Kgs 10:8;). Moreover, Chronicles expands and adds times of joy (see 5:11-13; 7:1-3). These scenes of joy and happiness were designed to offer the Chronicler's readers a portrait of what could be their experience, if they would follow Solomon's example.

Structural Overview of Solomon's Reign

Solomon's reign divides into eight symmetrical steps followed by a standard closure (see figure 22). This symmetrical structure creates a resonance between corresponding elements that gives insight into their prominent concerns. All of Solomon's reign is enclosed by the theme of his wisdom (1:1-17; 9:13-28). Solomon's international recognition demonstrates the extent of his wisdom (2:1-18; 8:17-9:12). At the heart of the king's reign, however, is his devotion to construction projects (3:1-5:1; 8:1-15) and especially the ceremony of the temple's dedication (5:2-7:22).

Solomon's Great Wisdom and Wealth (1:1-17)
 Solomon's International Assistance (2:1-18)
 Solomon's Temple Building Project (3:1-5:1)
 Solomon's Assembly to Dedicate the Temple (5:2-7:10)
 Solomon's Response from God (7:11-22)
 More on Solomon's Building Projects (8:1-16)
 More on Solomon's International Relations (8:17-9:21)
 More on Solomon's Great Wisdom and Wealth (9:22-28)
 Closure of Solomon's Reign (9:29-31)

Outline of Solomon's Reign (figure 22)

With this overarching structural pattern in mind, the smaller units of Solomon's reign fall into place (see figure 23).

- Solomon's Great Wisdom and Wealth (1:1-17)
 - ◆ Solomon Receives Divine Promises (1:1-13)
 - Solomon Reigns over Israel (1:1)
 - Solomon Goes to Gibeon to Worship (1:2-6)
 - Solomon and God Dialogue (1:7-12)
 - God Speaks (1:7)
 - Solomon Responds (1:8-10)
 - God Speaks (1:11-12)
 - Solomon Returns to Jerusalem (1:13a)
 - Solomon Reigns over Israel (1:13b)
 - ◆ Solomon Experiences Divine Promises (1:14-17)
 - Military Strength (1:14)
 - Domestic Prosperity (1:15)
 - International Trade (1:16-17)
 - Solomon's International Assistance (2:1-18)
 - Solomon's Conscripted Laborers (2:1-2)
 - Solomon and Hiram Correspond (2:3-16)
 - Solomon's Letter (2:3-10)
 - Hiram's Letter (2:11-16)
 - More on Solomon's Conscripted Laborers (2:17-18)
 - Solomon's Temple Building Project (3:1-5:1)
 - ◆ Solomon Begins Construction (3:1-2)
 - Solomon's Temple Building (3:3-17)
 - Overview of the Temple (3:3-4)
 - Divisions of the Temple (3:5-17)

- Main Hall (3:5-7)
 - Most Holy Place (3:8-14)
 - Portico (3:15-17)
 - Solomon's Temple Furnishings (4:1-10)
 - In the Priestly Court (4:1-6)
 - In the Main Hall (4:7-8)
 - In the Priestly Court (4:9-10)
 - Reiteration and Elaboration (4:11-22)
 - Hiram's Help (4:11-18)
 - Solomon's Furnishings and Decorations (4:19-22)
 - ◆ Solomon Completes Construction (5:1)
- Solomon's Assembly to Dedicate the Temple (5:2-7:10)
 - ◆ Solomon's Assembly Gathers (5:2-3)
 - Solomon's Initial Celebration of the Temple (5:4-6:2)
 - Celebrative Worship Outside the Most Holy Place (5:4-6)
 - Placing the Ark in the Most Holy Place (5:7-10)
 - Celebrative Worship Outside the Most Holy Place (5:11-6:2)
 - Solomon's Praise for the Past (6:3-11)
 - Transitional Introduction (6:3)
 - Praise for Fulfillment of the Promise to David (6:4-6)
 - Explanation of Solomon's Role (6:7-9)
 - Praise for Keeping the Promise to David (6:10-11)
 - Solomon's Prayer for the Future (6:12-42)
 - Introduction to the Prayer (6:12-13)
 - Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer (6:14-42)
 - Praise and Petitions for the Monarchy (6:14-17)
 - Praise (6:14-15)
 - Petitions (6:16-17)
 - Praise and Petitions for the Temple (6:18-39)
 - Praise (6:18)
 - Petitions (6:19-39)
 - In General (6:19-21)
 - Regarding Oaths (6:22-23)
 - Regarding Defeat (6:24-25)
 - Regarding Drought (6:26-27)
 - Regarding Assorted Disasters (6:28-31)
 - Regarding Foreigners (6:32-33)
 - Regarding Foreign Wars (6:34-35)
 - Regarding National Exile (6:36-39)
 - Solomon's Concluding Sacrifices and Celebration (7:1-7)
 - Divine Fire and Glory (7:1-3)
 - Numerous Sacrifices (7:4-7)
 - ◆ Solomon's Assembly Dismisses (7:8-10)

- Solomon's Response from God (7:11-22)
 - Introduction (7:11-12a)
 - Divine Approval of the Temple (7:12b)
 - Divine Instructions and Assurances to the Nation (7:13-16)
 - Divine Instructions and Warnings to the Monarchy (7:17-22)

- More on Solomon's Building Projects (8:1-15)
 - Solomon's Widespread Construction Projects (8:1-6)
 - Solomon's Extensive Labor Force (8:7-10)
 - Solomon's Temple Construction (8:11-15)

- More on Solomon's International Relations (8:16-9:21)
 - Introduction (8:16)
 - ◆ Solomon and Hiram in Maritime Trade (8:17-18)
 - Solomon Begins the Venture (8:17)
 - Hiram Sends Ships (8:18a)
 - Solomon Receives Goods from the Venture (8:18b)
 - ◆ Solomon and Arabian Reactions (9:1-14)
 - Queen of Sheba Honors Solomon (9:1-12)
 - Queen Comes to Solomon (9:1)
 - Solomon Answers the Queen's Questions (9:2)
 - The Queen Admires Solomon (9:3-9)
 - [Solomon's Wealth from Hiram's Fleet (9:10-11)]
 - Solomon Responds to the Queen's Admiration (9:12a)
 - The Queen Departs from Solomon (9:12b)
 - Arabian Kings Acknowledge Solomon (9:13-14)
 - ◆ Solomon and Hiram in Maritime Trade (9:15-21)

- More on Solomon's Great Wisdom and Wealth (9:22-28)
 - Introduction (9:22)
 - Solomon's Worldwide Recognition (9:23-24)
 - Solomon's Worldwide Imports (9:25-28)

- Closure of Solomon's Reign (9:29-31)

Outline of 2 Chr 1:1-9:31 (figure 23)